

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE C - 15

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Arms Merchant Gave \$40,000 To Mrs. Hatfield

Antoinette Hatfield, the wife of Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.) received \$40,000 in payments during 1982 and 1983 from Basil Tsakos, a Greek arms merchant who had enlisted the senator's support in promoting a trans-African oil pipeline.

The senator acknowledged that his wife received money from Tsakos, but said this had nothing to do with his efforts on behalf of the pipeline project.

Hatfield said the money was paid to his wife in connection with a real estate transaction, but declined to discuss the matter in detail on grounds that it was private business.

Hatfield said he was speaking for his wife. My associate Corky Johnson was informed that she would not be available for comment.

According to the senator, the money was a "finder's fee" paid after his wife, a real estate agent in the District of Columbia, located the Watergate condominium that Tsakos purchased. Some of the money was for consulting work related to the remodeling of the apartment, the senator said.

Real estate professionals told my associate that payments for such

consulting work are not unusual. But sources said there was no consistency to the payments, which appeared to be made at Tsakos' whim.

A real estate agent in the Watergate building said that she had made the introductions that led to Tsakos' purchase of the condominium. She said she was unaware of any involvement by Mrs. Hatfield in the transaction.

Two of the checks were written in August, 1982, six months after the apartment sale. Both checks were issued on the same day by the Watergate branch of the Riggs National Bank of Washington, and each was for \$7,500. The checks were recorded in Tsakos' ledger with the notation, "A.H.—for business purposes."

A \$15,000 check to Mrs. Hatfield was written on Tsakos' bank account in Luxembourg in mid-1982. A check for \$10,000 was written on a Riggs Watergate-branch account in December, 1983.

When asked about the checks, Tsakos told his accountant and associates that he was making payments to Mrs. Hatfield, but he gave no explanation. Mrs. Hatfield reportedly told Tsakos about several other real estate listings, none of which he bought.

The senator declined to disclose the amount of money his wife received from the Greek arms dealer, but said she had recorded the pay-

ments properly on her income tax returns.

Last December, a greeting card was sent to Tsakos with a handwritten note saying, "Thank you so very much for the help!" The note was signed, "Antoinette."

The Hatfields maintained cordial relations with Tsakos and his wife during the period when the checks were written. Washington attorney Carl Shipley, a friend of Hatfield, gave the senator an intelligence document that disclosed Tsakos' criminal record in Greece.

When Hatfield asked Tsakos about the dossier, the arms dealer told him it was false; he said the only thing on his record was a minor traffic violation. Hatfield had an attorney check into Tsakos and was informed that he was "clean." So the senator continued to use his influence on behalf of the Greek's proposed pipeline, which would carry oil across Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean.

Sources agreed that the senator sincerely believed the pipeline project was a viable option for the administration's policy of guaranteeing an uninterrupted flow of Middle East oil, through military action, if necessary.

In future columns, I will report on other Washington insiders who have had dealings with Tsakos.

Tsakos could not be reached for comment despite repeated efforts by my office.